All the World's a Stage: The Power of Representing and Re-Contextualizing Authoritarian Violence in Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*

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INTRODUCTION

From the beginnings of mimetic art, Western scholarship has concerned itself with reflecting on its relationship with political and social life. In the case of theatrical performance, classical philosophers and artists from Plato to Aristotle to Shakespeare have agreed on an understanding of it as a medium which "imitates", "reflects", "represents", or "expresses" social life (Schechner 116). In these traditional conceptions of drama, the audience sits back and observes the designated, staged performance for their own enjoyment, entertainment, and personal contemplation. In this model there is a clear separation between those performing and those watching, a theatrical mirror that reflects the rigid social divisions of the period. To use the example of Shakespeare, although the theatre was one of the only popular sites where people from different feudal social standings met under the same roof, the audience members knew where they stood within the social network; that is to say the players were players, the lords were lords, the peasants were peasants, etc.

However, the world we inhabit today is distinctly different from that of these classical playwrights and thinkers. Where their social life was defined and solidified, predicated on determined social roles, ours is characterized by precarity and unraveling of boundaries previously thought to be immutable. The dropping of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima brought our attention to humans' ability to destroy the livability of this planet for the first time (Lowenhaupt Tsing 3). This awareness increased with the growing realization of climate change and mass extinction and continues to bother us with uncertainties. In conjunction with this sense of ecological instability, the rise of the Internet, social media, and entertainment news has effectively shrunk the distance between the worlds' populations and molded our understanding of art and performance to include things which were previously not thought of

as such (Schechner 31). Through the Internet, art moves freely across borders. Venezuelan musicians influence American dancers who in turn influence Kyrgyzstani photographers, fomenting a global zeitgeist without national or cultural limits. Writing in 2002, in his work *Performance Studies: An Introduction,* Richard Schechner underscores how beyond the world of "composed" work, the Internet has created pathways for "accidental" and "incidental" performance (31). Live streams (deliberate or inadvertent) circulate what people do in the comfort of their homes over the internet (31), and activities which previously did not have (or need) an audience have a plethora of viewers embedded into them with every post. Network television infuses drama and human interest in the news in order to make it as pleasurable to watch as possible. Everyday life has become more and more art-like, and this phenomenon has only progressed in the 17 years since the publication of Schechner's work. As I pull out my iPhone to watch my Chinese friend's Instagram story of the meal she cooked for herself and her grandmother, no ocean or land mass exists between us, and she displays her quotidian life to viewers she would not have had even five years ago. Thus, given all of these instabilities, contradictions, anxieties, transformations, and revolutions which foreground our experiences as human beings in the 21st century, much like a historical life which required a theatre which reflected their social structure, our current condition calls for theatre which echoes this fragmentation, dissolution, uncertainty, and necessary rejection of passivity.

It is this realization which brings us to our discussion of Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*. The epochal play demonstrates the necessity to take action and refuse complicity in the Argentine context. However, the project is more relevant now than ever

because it speaks to the urgent need for political engagement which is essential in combatting the international rise of fascism and adequately addressing the precarity that defines our time.

Written between 1971-1973, first published in Spanish in 1987, and first translated in English in 1992 (Feitlowitz 5-6), Gambaro's work is deeply steeped in in the Argentine *grotesco criollo*, the Living Newspaper theatre, and the Latin American Theatre of Liberation. Given its complex history of circulation and various contextual roots, it can and has been interpreted to signify markedly different things. This thesis examines the ways in which Griselda Gambaro's play *Information for Foreigners* evokes confusion, fear, and trauma in the viewer by directly interpolating them into the plot. The play, I argue, simulates the embodied experience of living in spaces terrorized by state sanctioned violence and calls for the viewers to embrace active resistance and reject complicity and passivity. In addition to a discursive analysis of the piece, an investigation of secondary sources places the play within the broader context of Latin American studies and Argentine history. Through an unconventional, convoluted narrative structure which positions the audience as bystanders passing through absurd vignettes of both the violence enacted by the military government, and Argentine citizens circulating the news of the killings amongst themselves, Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners* combines the political and the domestic to explore how these violent narratives are transferred and received in our quotidian lives. An examination of the play must consider the audience's response in approaching the play, just as the representation of civilian reception of these narratives of the Argentine dictatorship is necessary to understand the mechanisms which produced this regime and the feelings which surround it. Pushing the audience through the play's scenes, Gambaro uses the medium of theater to construct an obvious artifice, challenging the audience to

consider the occurrences of the play as a part of their own lived reality and fostering an understanding that state sanctioned violence both happened and persistently happens in one form or another. In this formulation of such a thin line between audience members and actors, Gambaro effectively challenges the audience to reject apathy, and to take action against embodiments of political violence and injustice, in order to prevent anything like this to ever happen again.

Given that Gambaro's play was one of the first pieces to address the chaotic, violent, tense atmosphere of Argentina before the 1976 coup d'état, the audience members Gambaro wrote for would have understood the scenes as mimetic reflections of their own life. Scholars such as Joanne Pottlitzer, Diana Taylor, Margeurite Feitlowitz, and Myriam Yvonne Jehensen have already established the relevance of *Information for Foreigners* within the historical context of Argentina, in the fields of Latin American studies and World Literature. However, *Information for Foreigners* has never been performed in Latin America and has almost solely circulated as an English text within North American academic circles with the most movement occurring between 1990 and the present. For this reason, I am interested in how *Information for Foreigners* speaks beyond its context of creation and its historical moment. I study it as a living work, one relevant to contemporary conflicts, a text which offers opportunities for audiences to face the struggles they endure today. My inquiry will demonstrate the importance of both re-contextualizing historical works in order to gain insight into contemporary concerns and will explore the delicate complexity of successfully representing state-sanctioned violence and trauma.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Before discussing *Information for Foreigner*'s textual power and its relevance as a contemporary work, it is necessary to examine the historical context from which it arose, both in the Argentine setting and within the larger movement of 20th century avant-garde theatre. Written between 1971-1973, *Information for Foreigners* was conceived during a time period in Argentina defined by chaos and instability perpetrated by the far-right authoritarian government as it attempted to quash popular resistance. According to the history laid out by Luis Alberto Romero and translated by James P. Brennan in their book *A Brief History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, the play was written within the presidency of General Juan Carlos Onganía (appointed by military commanders-in-chief in 1966), the presidency of General Roberto Marcelo Livingston (appointed by military commanders-in-chief in June 1970), the presidency of General Alejandro Agustín Laneusse (appointed by military March 1971), the presidency of Héctor José Cámpora (a puppet for Perón [196], voted in March 1973), and the second presidency of Juan Perón (who assumes Cámpora's position in July 1973). All of these events occurred on the precipice of the country's fifth military coup since 1930, which erupted in 1976. Although Gambaro's work does not represent to the experience of life under the Junta government that is the best-known of these successive regimes, it clearly evokes the violent intensity and instability of the Argentine political landscape in the years leading up to the third military coup and acts as a malevolent prophecy to the violence perpetrated in the years to come. For this reason, our reading of the play benefits from a fuller understanding of this political landscape at the time of Gambaro's writing.

Put into power in 1966, General Onganía's regime was characterized as an "authoritarian shock-treatment" (Romero et al 174) of which the principle target was the university.

Considered to be a “cradle of communism”, schools of higher learning were targeted and stripped of their autonomy. The night after the 1966 coup, police burst into the departments of the University of Buenos Aires, roughing up professors and students. This pushed many professors to resign, in hopes of continuing their work abroad, while other scholars and artists worked to establish recondite spaces of radical thought (Romero et al 175) (Until her exile in 1977, Gambaro functioned in the latter category). Adding to this growing sense of constricting control, under the watchful eye of the Catholic Church, censorship was extended to prohibit all precursors to communism and Western hedonism. Their referendums restricted divorce, pornography, free-love, and the latest fashions (Romero et al 175), further extending the reaches of conservative authoritarianism to control physical, bodily expressions.

Meanwhile, as the government exerted increasingly authoritarian, reactionary control to prevent acts of subversion, worldwide struggles for liberation persistently grew stronger, an influence that reached Argentine citizens. Eugène van Erven characterizes liberation as a “a worldwide solidarity movement took shape in support of all oppressed and exploited peoples, ranging from women in the West to Vietnamese peasants in the Far East, from Bolivian campesinos in South America to Blacks in southern Africa and in the United States of America” (11). Argentine popular resistance to fascism participated in this global phenomenon of people’s springs which began to erupt in the late 1960s. The Argentine case culminated in the 1969 *Cordobazo*, a protest in Córdoba in which student and labor activists came together to occupy the city center, resulting in military intervention and subsequent deaths of 20-30 civilians. This suppression of opposition destroyed what remained of Onganía’s legitimacy (Romero et al 180), and the aftermath of the *Cordobazo* against repression mobilized collective

action in Argentina to a scale it had never seen before, and guerrilla mobilizations which emerged in the early 60s post-*Cordobazo* grew in power and influence, attracting new members (Romero et al 189). As Latin Americans, liberation in Argentina was especially influenced by their witnessing of the Cuban Revolution. Ernesto "Che" Guevara was *argentino* himself, and his 1967 death spoke to radical Argentines as an exemplar of sacrificing everything for the revolution without fear of pain, violence, or death. Disorder and bloodshed escalated during the early 1970s, with leftist guerillas kidnapping and murdering government insiders (Romero et al 189-190), and police and military officials kidnapping, torturing, assassinating, and disappearing activists without risk of punishment (Romero et al 194). In June 1970, after the abduction and execution of former president General Pedro Aramburu at the hands of the Peronist *Montoneros* guerrilla group*,* Onganía was removed from office by the military (Romero et al 192), and the hasty succession of presidents I alluded to earlier in this section ensued. The explicit selecting and staging of rulers combined with daily reports of assassinations, imprisonments, and disappearances created its own form of volatile political theatre.

In this time of violence and instability, Argentine activists, artists, and intellectuals deeply experienced terror, paranoia, and uncertainty about their political circumstances. They also experienced the need to take action and resist the pervasive authoritarian violence which surrounded them. Gambaro herself stayed as long as she could in Argentina, writing within these concealed academic spaces, burning and burying books, and enduring the disappearances of friends and colleagues (Feitlowitz 2). She hid the manuscript of *Information for Foreigners* in her house, then smuggled it out when she was eventually forced into exile in 1977 (Feitlowitz 2). Her work as much encapsulates the horror and panic felt by the Argentine citizens living

through these dangerous times as it does call for action and resistance against the pervasive violence overtaking their lives. I will return to these themes later in this paper to explore how Gambaro draws these discomfiting out in the text.

THEATRICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

Now that we have firmly established the socio-political context from which Griselda Gambaro developed *Information for Foreigners*, I want to examine the broader context of avant-garde theatre in the 20th century. As I mentioned before, the play fits within several established dramatic traditions: The Argentine *grotesco criollo,* the Living Newspaper, and the Latin American Theatre of Liberation. In this next section I will work to provide basic definitions and contexts for each one of these practices. Of course, these do not operate on thematically separate planes, nor are they are mutually exclusive categories. On the contrary, each of these theatrical customs share many essential characteristics of post-modern theatre as laid out by Schechner, namely a complication of the division between art and life, an emphasis on spontaneity, and the premise of performance as an acute tool used to critique and transform political circumstance (116). It is not that this work fits entirely into any of these genres; rather integrates aspects from all of them to engage with many conversations.

Throughout her decade-spanning career, Griselda Gambaro has insisted on *Information for Foreigner*'s place within the early twentieth-century Argentine genre of *el grotesco criollo*. As outlined by Milton Loayza in his addition to the Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism, the creation of the tradition is broadly attributed to the playwright Armando Discepólo, who derived it by combining the Italian *grottesco* theatre and the already existing Argentine *sainete criollo*. The result is an exaggerated, twisted black comedy (Pottlitzer 2004) typically

representing immigrant families in Buenos Aires as they grapple with their failed expectations of success modern life ("Grotesco Criollo"). Evidently, while Gambaro herself has insisted on the work's connection with the *grotesco criollo* (Feitlowitz 3), aside from sharing overarching themes, the mechanisms of this genre appear to have little in common with *Information for Foreigners*. So how do we explain Gambaro's strong insistence in considering her work as a part of this genre? In her introduction to her translation, Margeurite Feitlowitz affirms that this is due to the widespread misconception that Gambaro's style has roots in absurdist theatre, which concerns itself with metaphysics and states of being (3). In her view, Gambaro's association with the *grotesco criollo* stems from her desire to reject this misinterpretation, and ground her plays in combative, confrontational political theatre that insists changing the human condition is possible. Similarly, in her article "Griselda Gambaro's Theatre of Violence", Joanne Pottlitzer suggests that *Information for Foreigners* should be considered more of an "outgrowth" (103) of this genre, a phrase which figures Gambaro' as altering and adding-on to the tradition.

Both of these assertions are clear and reasonable explanations for Gambaro's generic identification, however while researching South American censorship during the 60s and 70s, I came across another possible motive I would like to suggest as complementary to these other ideas. In describing counter-censorial strategies employed by dramaturges during the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships of the late 70s, Jean Graham-Jones illustrates how playwrights often negotiated constraining limitations by "cloaking" their work in already canonized, and therefore sanctioned, structures like the *grotesco criollo* (602). Although *Information for Foreigners* was not written under the dictatorship Graham-Jones's work addresses specifically,

Gambaro felt many of the same political and censorial pressures in her time, and therefore it is rational to conclude she had similar justification for reiterating her work's position within this genre. By nestling *Information for Foreigners* within the broader tradition of the *grotesco criollo*, Gambaro utilizes a more recognized, tame genre to insert subversive conversations with less risk of detrimental repercussions.

Although *Information for Foreigners* has not been discussed explicitly in relation to the Living Newspaper, it is a work which depends on the acting out of news articles as the fundamental foundation for its otherwise extremely opaque narrative. As detailed by John W. Casson in his article "Living Newspaper: Theatre and Therapy", in an act of synchronicity, the theatrical tradition originated harmoniously at the turn of the 20th century in the USSR and Austria, and has continued to be practiced into the 21st century, taking form in Britain, the U.S., India, and South America. The Living Newspaper has materialized in various ways in its diverse contexts, but it essentially consists of groups performing selections from the daily newspaper for a number of goals. Most notably Living Newspaper workshops serve to stimulate actors' and audience spontaneity (111), and to heal therapeutically via psychodrama (118). To give a specific example of how this type of theatre is typically employed to meet these ends, Casson describes one man who came to his psychodrama training group feeling frustrated from work. This man chose to act out a murderous newspaper clipping of an old man who bludgeons a young woman to death after rejecting his advances, a grisly role which helped him express his rage and take responsibility for his anger healthily (119). Casson mentions this man returned to work the next day "empowered by the drama" (119) and "able to stand ground in a conflict more constructively because he felt clearer" (119). Granted, as a scripted piece, *Information for*

Foreigners does not touch on the same level of curative improvisation as this example does. However, as a play which asks us to confront the dangers, tragedies, and anguishes of authoritarian violence while occupying a "safe distance" (119) from brutality by inhabiting an ambiguous space that is not necessarily "real" or "our own", *Information for Foreigners* fits clearly into this larger conversation.

A third significant point of reference for Gambaro's work is Augusto Boal's Theatre of Liberation, a community-based theatre of social change (Schechner 153) first employed by Brazilian Boal in Peru in 1973 (Van Erven 21). The particularities of Boal's project are based on the principle that the focus of successful theatre should not be the effectiveness of the writing, costuming, acting, staging, etc., but rather the operations which go on in the spectator's mind (Van Erven 21). To use Boal's words, the main objective of Theatre of Liberation is to:

> "change the people – 'spectators' into subjects, into actors, transformers of dramatic action… [the audience] assumes the protagonist role, changes dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, trains himself for the real action. In this case, perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution... It is not the place of the theatre to show the correct path, but only to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined" (qtd. in Schechner 2002)

The execution of Theatre of Liberation typically has involved grassroots workshops based on acting out social and political conflicts, a practice that instills agency in each actor through improvisation. It is worth mentioning Boal often included Living Newspaper exercises into these seminars (Van Erven 23), a fact which further highlights the connection between Gambaro's work and this tradition. For Boal, through this emphasis on spontaneity and individual instrumentality "one begins to practice theater as a language that is living and present, not as a finished product displaying images from the past" (qtd. in Van Erven 22).

Although Gambaro's work is not a direct product of Boal's Theatre of Liberation, as artists emerging from approximately the same place and time, Boal and Gambaro were contemporaries whose purposes manifestly aligned. According to a 1990 interview with Boal, he directed Gambaro's play *Malasangre* for the German stage in 1984 (Boal et al 70), so they were at least aware of each other's work. Their influence on each other is plainly evident in their thematic qualities; both engage with surrounding authoritarianism by drawing out questions of viewership and agency, and the degree to which action is available to spectators. Nonetheless, as a script-based play, *Information for Foreigners* does not offer the same level of subjectivity as works typically offered in the Theatre of Liberation. However, by implicating the audience as witnesses sharing physical space with this violence, Gambaro asks spectators to confront their own passivity. In the sense that Boal's project is a "rehearsal for the revolution" (qtd. in Schechner 154) through the way it inspires action, Gambaro's project behaves similarly to warn against the dangers of inaction. If Theatre of Liberation presents a manner to explore all possible successes and failures of a revolution, *Information for Foreigners* simulates one resolute, enormous collapse of the situation in which all individual actors are unable to intervene to transform the situation into resistance.

AS A TEXT

For this section, I will home in on the actual text of *Information for Foreigners* in order to examine how the play simultaneously demonstrates the mechanisms of authoritarianism, and mimics their organization in the narrative structure, absurd dialogues, and use of pre-texts and cultural allusions. The net effect is to evoke fear, discomfort, and confusion in the readers or viewers as incentive to incite collective action against brutal authoritarianism. The peculiar narrative architecture of *Information for Foreigners* places as much emphasis on the

subjectivity and vulnerability of the viewer as it does expose the presence of a threatening, all-controlling power. This arrangement effectively imitates the dissemination of information in authoritarian governments and pushes the audience to internalize this facilitated fear and anxiety as part of their experience.

In order to draw out the impact of this convoluted narrative structure, it is first necessary to describe the dramatic design. To look to the text, Gambaro lays it out delicately in the dramatis personae:

> The audience will be divided into groups, the number and size of which will depend on the space. A particular number or color can serve to identify each group.
> Group 1 will mark one possible development of the action.
> Guides 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. lead their respective groups. The order in which the scenes are observed by these groups is left to the director's discretion until the last scene, scene 20, when all groups converge.
> In certain scenes, actors play audience members and are actually a part of the audience. Audience members, however, are never forced to participate in the action.
> The groups cross in the passageways and may watch the same scene – perhaps one taking place in the passageway – when the director considers necessary. (Gambaro 69-70)

With these words, Gambaro makes the clear decision to first remove the spectators from their comfort zone by displacing them from any seats dividing them into groups. Placed into smaller, intimate contexts under such cryptic circumstances, audience members are uncertain how to react, and unsure of who they are sharing this experience with. Additionally, given these sparse instructions, depending on the respective production, viewers may not even be placed in the same cluster of audience members as the person they attended the play with, a directorial decision which would truly strip them of any chance of reassurance.

After establishing such an uncertain atmosphere for audience members, heightening their susceptibility to the more sinister elements of the play, Gambaro then imposes the apparently powerful watchdogs, the Guides, into the foundation of the narrative to look after

and direct each audience group. As their only connection between the acted world and the viewed world, spectators depend on the Guides to maneuver them safely through the obstacles of the theatre. In addition to escorting them through the corridors of the unconventional theatre space, Guides often take the position of contextualizing the scenes shown to the viewers, reading selections of newspaper articles which "objectively" clarify the otherwise bewildering scenarios of abduction and repression. However, the guides are far from trustworthy. As players who directly interact with audience groups, Guides preface, control, and censor each scene, manipulating how they are observed and interpreted. In some scenes, they are simply vaguely unsettling, facing the audience with "a big, feigned smile" (88). In others, Guides act as enforcers for the rhetoric of the regime, affirming how the play speaks to "our way of life: Western, Christian, and Argentine" (71). They carry out some of the more sexist ends of these politics via persistent censorship for women viewers, insisting "Ladies may not look!" (89) and "Ladies, your forgiveness" (108). And at their darkest, Guides are seen kicking presumed political prisoners (88), holding a gun up to another detainee's head (89), and even threatening sexual violence against a young woman through crudely intrusive gestures that underscore the misogynistic dimensions of what was previously asserted as decorum (97). In this sense, the two defining architectural purposes of the guides, their menacing, cagey presence and the theatergoer's concurrent dependence on them, resembles the very inner-workings of the authoritarian government, where fear-mongering and an iron-grip on information push citizens to seek safety and security in the very institutions which facilitate this violence. Through this unconventional narrative structure, Gambaro expertly employs the

theatre's mimetic qualities to instill fear and uncertainty in the viewers, demonstrating how political messages are directed and controlled by these forces.

Equally as powerful and essential to understanding the *Information for Foreigners* text is the way in which churlish, limited, rhyming dialogues operate in the mouths officials as well as fellow citizens. Several scenes portraying judges, guards, bystanders, and policemen making arrests in public devolve into chanted verses, creating the unsettling effect which designates these actors as advancing the regime's goals. These interactions demonstrate the power of this type of regime has in weaponizing civilians against each other, highlighting the barbaric nature of this violence. Rhymed interjections are scattered throughout the text, with the most powerful examples coming in the form of "Peace and security / That is our domain / With a little authority / Order will be maintained!" (99), uttered by "Second Group of Men" and "We're here to clean! / We're here to clean! / The filth is gone / Your street is clean! / Let the mothers pray" (113-114) declared by "Group of Policemen". These dialogues derive their significance from both the "double discourse" (Feitlowitz 5) they employ, as well as their poetic structure. What is "cleanliness", what is "filth", what is "peace", what is "order" in these contexts, and whose "security" are these declarations protecting? The rhyme's power also lies in the collective strength of a chant. As entire groups of people are represented to call upon these phrases while witnessing an arrest, these verses stand for the verbal mechanism of authoritarianism, jumping off bystanders' tongues as officials bring down a subversive civilian. Gambaro's choice to reduce these loaded statements to basic, catchy rhymes also give them an eerie resonance to them, forming the impression that these ideas have an almost earworm level of popularity. The uncanny ability of all the actors to produce this chant at the same time

feels and reads like a nursery rhyme, commercial jingle, or a pop song from your childhood; texts so prevalent in our surroundings that we cannot nail precisely on the head who first exposed us to them or where we first encountered them, but nonetheless we all have internalized them. These dialogues also maintain a simplistic, childish tone to them which add a surreal level to the representations of violence, working to mark the forces that perpetrate it as equally nonsensical. This strategy casts doubt on the rhetoric purported by fascist regimes, and highlights the danger of trusting the reasoning offered by authority at face value.

Similar to how these dialogic moments echo and critique rhetoric employed by the regime, there are several points in *Information for Foreigners* in which Gambaro includes quotes and representations from other texts to offer readers context and knowledge, giving them the power to actively witness and process the actions occurring. In this sense, Gambaro not only plainly shows us how acts of violence are interpreted, and subsequently justified, by the fascist authoritarian ideology. She also provides the viewer with the resources and authority to debunk these myths. Specifically, as I have alluded to in previous sections, many of the scenes in the play rely on a backbone of factual basis as articles published in Argentine newspapers from 1971-72 (Gambaro 70). Selections from newspapers are read to the audience by the Guides before or after the ensuing scene, but there is a clear disparity between what is read and what is observed. In one scene displaying the disappearance of Nestor Martins and Nildo Zenteno, the report read describes:

> Six men surround Martins, violently force him into a white Peugot. Nildo Zenteno rushes back, manages to momentarily free the lawyer. A karate chop to the back of his neck brings Zenteno down as well. The car speeds off. A black Chevrolet escorts it. That car pulled out of a nearby parking lot of the Federal Police. (Gambaro 85).

The audience then proceeds to watch a scene in which a mother and father narrate these happenings to their child:

> "Once upon a time there was a tall man, ugly, ugly, ugly… Bolivian. He had a pile of children. They procreate a lot. Then they send the kids here…The tall man met another man. This one was shorty. They talked and talked… And when they were tired of talking the tall man walked him to his car…And then, some men came, and since he was bad, they put him in another car to punish him. Because he was bad, bad." (Gambaro 87)

This racist reprisal of what was read underscores how Argentine civilians spread their own prejudices informed by fascism to their children (or, in a more generous interpretation, how distorted narratives are used by fearful parents to shield their children from information that would raise questions about events unfolding around them). As audience members, we feel this wedge between pre-text and text, and can pass our own informed judgments on the relevancy of this scene from the information provided in the newspaper section. By prefacing the scene with information, the grisly, bizarre representation of a young family distorting facts to interpret a story of abduction and disappearance as a "good thing" illuminates the audience to how such atrocity is excused in the eyes of the Argentine public. It also reveals this reading for what it really is: one-dimensional, fear-mongering fodder designed to crush subversive action. As Joanne Pottlitzer states beautifully, with these news-based vignettes, Gambaro employs the aesthetic act of theatre to "wake us up from anesthetizing misinformation and emotional deformation" (105). Gambaro's work is less about convincing the audience of one way to think, and much more about drawing the viewer's attention to the many forces at work shaping reality, and instilling them with the power to form their own understanding.

A discussion of the way in which Gambaro infuses contextual knowledge into *Information for Foreigners* to educate and caution the viewers about the operations of authoritarianism would be incomplete without a breakdown of Scene 4, which deliberately and

explicitly communicates the dangers of blindly following authority. Transporting the audience from the declared setting of 1971 Buenos Aires to 1963 Germany (84), this scene depicts in its entirety an iteration of the Milgram Experiment, a now-infamous investigation that set out to explore up to what point civilians continue to follow orders from authority figures. Researchers designate the subject as the teacher, and it is then the teacher's responsibility to coach a student to memorize of a series of word associations, delivering an electric shock of increasing power each time an error is committed. Unbeknownst to the teacher however, the student is a planted actor, trained to scream on cue, and the electric shocks are fake. As the teacher intensifies the electric shock received with each wrong answer, the student demonstrates more and more experiences of pain and a growing desire to stop the experiment. However, in many cases, "teachers" persist at the orders of the researchers until reaching a fatal shock. Gambaro's depiction of this study is perhaps the most logical and cleanly laid out scene in the entire work, a clear decision which firmly implants a set of concepts in the viewer's head for them to work with later. As an experiment touching on themes of "staged" performance as well, Gambaro's inclusion of the Milgram Experiment again confronts questions of bystanders and witnessing. The scene plays out essentially what I just described: a "professional" (75) explanation of the experiment as an investigation in "the pedagogical effect of punishment" (75), during which the teacher listens to the researcher like "a child waiting instructions" (77), before performing the actions confidently. However, as scene develops, it begins to unravel to bring audience attention to its falsity. The pupil cries out like "those of someone who, as a joke, coarsely imitates moans, groans, and pains" (79), a choice that with each scream, purposefully directs audience attention toward the performed nature of the action at hand. The façade

continues to become more and more obvious. When asked to recite the word memorized to correspond to “nation”, instead of correctly responding “Germany”, the pupil howls “Argentina” (83), suggesting a dissolution of the staged experiment and a creeping in of another set of circumstances. We are left to wonder, where are we? Which world are we occupying right now – the one of the Milgram experiment? The one of Griselda Gambaro? Our own world? How should we react based on these contexts? The scene concludes with deeply ironic commentary from a Guide, “The experiment was done in Germany and the United States. Here among ourselves, it would be unthinkable and absurd” (84). With this scene, Gambaro is utilizing the Milgram experiment as a text to inform and contextualize the viewer’s own circumstances as they witness the repeated abuse of power in the other vignettes. What would we do, if put in the same situation? Should we have intervened in the abuse of power we just witnessed? Will we intervene in the proceeding scenes? Have we learned anything? What constitutes the “right” action in these circumstances?

Gambaro also employs brief, casual intertextual allusions to national and cultural mythologies to demystify the constructed ideological mechanisms of authoritarianism and push the audience to reject them as well. These references anchor the regime to a historic narrative which does not take the forefront of the scenes, but instead bubbles up in these muddled, detached instances of dialogue, mimicking how authoritarian forces forcibly narrativize their fight. Throughout the text, the most prominent, recurring example of this is how the Guides bafflingly refer to the first Christians in the catacombs while meandering through the set as if this were the purpose of their tour. In between lulls of action, Guides in scenes 7 and 13 ask the audience “What was the other one telling you?” (89) and “Now what were we going to see?”

(111). “Oh, yes! The remains of the first Christians!” (89), they respond, relieved to have their excursion back on track. Guides in scenes 8 and 13 devolve into rants about how “the first Christians were very persecuted” (91) and “the first Christians had a really hard time of it”, underscoring their victimhood in descriptions of “how the lions loved to chew them up” (111). The strange dispersal of this disconnected narrative reflects how nationalist, fascist, authoritarian regimes incorporate other moments in history into their own discourse, as if to imply that they are fighting the same fight, but the gesture is in fact one of manipulative appropriation. The iteration of authority that the Guides represent wants to position itself as in a lineage with the first Christians, and the Guides’ scattered allusions to the catacombs indicate their desire to be seen as persecuted for their cause. However, this ideology manifests itself in the text in such a vague, detached manner to ensure the viewers recognize that the connection is not really there. The remains of the first Christians in the catacombs have nothing actually to do with the violence and atrocity we witness throughout the play, but it is in their best interest to construct this connection.

Scene 9 offers another example in which national myths are employed only to demonstrate their dangerous, hollow absurdity. In this passage, children of subversives are challenged to prove their innocence based on their ability to correctly answer questions about their national heritage:

> CHIEF: I’ll see if they’re not already lost. Kids: Who created the flag?
> MOTHER: (begging them) Answer right, answer right!
> CHILDREN: (in unison) Manuel Belgrano!
> CHIEF: When?
> CHILDREN: February 27, 1812
> CHIEF: Where?
> CHILDREN: On the banks of the Paraná. He had it blessed right there, beneath the blue and white sky, blue and white sky, blue and white…

> CHIEF: Exactly! Very good! (kisses them) Here's a prize. (gives them each a piece of candy) (Gambaro 94)

Clearly, as a collective, chanted, sing-song dialogue which plainly re-produces rhetoric of the regime, this interaction has much in common with the chants I discussed earlier in this section. However, the idea that the children's' innocence relies on their memorization of a series of minute details of national myths speaks simultaneously to the power of these national imaginaries and unveils them as deeply absurd.

In sum, Gambaro utilizes her text to astutely draw out two ends: firstly, to simulate the embodied experience of living under authoritarianism (as observed in my discussion of the Guides, the narrative structure, and the rhyming dialogues), and secondly to disempower authoritarian devices by representing their pure absurdity and informing the viewer on their inner-workings (as observed in my discussion of pre-texts and allusions). With these take-aways, we can begin our discussion of *Information for Foreigners* as a contemporary theatrical work.

AS A PERFORMANCE

I had the serendipitous opportunity to see *Information for Foreigners* performed by the Denison University Theatre Department, a private liberal arts college about 30 miles away from Columbus. My analysis was deepened by the chance to see the deemed-unperformable work in the flesh, with all of its contradictions and idiosyncrasies in full form. I crouched in a cramped hallway and saw a Guide stick his hand up a young prisoner's dress. In another scene, I sat around a table with a prostrate young woman laying on its surface and watched a fellow audience member suffocate her. Both of these were "fake" acts performed under the guise of

theatre of course, but all the same, I did witness them. This portion of my paper will examine the complexity added to this work from experiencing it as a member of the audience.

Seeing Griselda Gambaro's work as a viewer is characterized by the essential dialectic of Brechtian theatre. That is, to quote Tony Kushner, "it creates an illusion which is both effective and not at the same time, that it asks you to believe deeply in something that is absolutely artificial and fake, and that you hold both of those feelings and awarenesses, belief and disbelief in the same place, in the same impossible tension" ("An introduction to Brechtian Theatre"). To engage in Gambaro's work is to be immersed in the intimacy of crowding around a person crying softly in a dimly lit dining room, while very aware that she is wearing 20th century clothing and costume makeup, reciting from a script, and you are surrounded by strangers who, just like you, paid for their ticket to experience these things, all the while you are all being "looked after by the Guides" (who are by turns menacing and solicitous), and observed by the stage managers, who are doing their best to keep each isolated scene flowing in time. Such an ambiguous context muddles the distinction between what is "real" and what is "fake". Without such an obvious line between them, the audience is forced to weigh the staged actions as possessing the same "reality" as those that are presumably unstaged.

This dissolving of technical boundaries complements the play's subject matter beautifully. As Diana Taylor describes in her work "Theater and Terrorism: Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*", the success of state terrorism is predicated on theatricality (165). The terrorist's ability to select the deserving victims and unveil them at the right time transforms the general public into a mass of vulnerable spectators. Thus, the themes of Gambaro's play gain amplification in the live performance. Uncertainty, awkwardness, tension

and sensitivity run amuck through the audience group. Interestingly, discomfort is as much about maintaining spectatorly decorum as it is about content. Viewers cope with a persistent fear of mis-stepping and derailing the plot of the play as large as their anxiety caused by the threatening, disturbing scenes they witness.

For the sake of any dramaturges and scholars who may come across this thesis in the future, I will describe the more nitty-gritty details of how the show was presented. The performance at Denison University was set on the three floors of Monomoy Place, a house built in 1863, which has now been annexed by the university, renovated, and turned into offices ("Monomoy Place"). As Gambaro suggested, audience members were split into groups. For this production each group was assigned a color by the box office. Each color had a corresponding Guide who navigated them through a series of scenes. After the set of scenes was over, audience groups would switch to follow a new guide with a new prescribed set of scenes. There were three guides, so this switch was repeated twice. Each audience group also had a stage manager who followed the groups, video chatting on their cellphone with another stage manager on an office computer. The stage manager in the office watched all three of the parallel-occurring scenes, to assure that all scene switches were timed correctly. Each set of scenes was modified to run the same exact amount of time. Scenes took place everywhere in the house: kitchen, dining room, living room, front room, closet, dance studio, bathroom, offices, etc. Actors utilized the service stairs to easily maneuver scene switches. Each actor played a series of roles, often within different scene sets.

I will now highlight certain aspects of my own subjective experience as a viewer of *Information for Foreigners* which I consider to be fundamental in understanding how

Gambaro's work embodies this break-down of traditional boundaries and challenges the viewer to reject complicity.

My overwhelming feeling as an audience member was that I was not viewing a play at all. The absence of microphones combined with frequent movement through close quarters compelled audience members to huddle near the Guide, setting a mood which was closer to conversation than presentation. Shrieks, screams, laughter, chanting, and gunshots from concurrent scenes intruded from other parts of the house into the scene we were presently in, giving the impression we're in the middle of something between hospital, jail, movie theatre, and haunted house. With no stage, no microphones, and no theatrical lighting, audience members shared perhaps the most intimate space with actors they'd ever had before. As the play concluded, there was no time or place for applause or celebration; we were simply pushed out by chanting actors and left to locate our friends and family who attended but were placed in separate groups. As intimate, raw, and intense these moments were, there was still a deliberate artificiality in the way things were presented. Characters employed sock puppets, dramatic makeup, tissue-paper fake blood, and obviously contrived acting style to accentuate the absurd nature of the text. In conscious contention with the viewer's exposure to hyper-real representations of violence in the news, disturbing scenes were diffused through this falsity as much as they appeared confrontational and demanding. Scenes which felt intensely barbaric and physical in the text came across as farcical shadows of the original action. State-sanctioned violence transformed into something slapstick-ish, ridiculous, and childish, an unconventional spectacle that pushed viewers to reconcile the atrocities witnessed in a new way.

Meandering through the dimly-lit, creaky old mansion, I felt very cautious of where I stepped. My audience group was large – 15 or 20 people—and walking through even the widest of corridors presented a delicate test, with 30 swinging arms to watch out for and 150 toes to avoid trampling. Finally, the guide arrived at his talking point, a drawing in the pantry, and we all closely gathered around him to hear him speak. My shoulders felt two other pairs of shoulders slightly pressure them -- we needed to squeeze to get in here. The impression is the space wasn't designed for this kind of thing, its physical bounds couldn't fit us, and didn't really want us. Occupying this more secondary space of the house reminded me that people really did live here once, after all what do alumni relations or university tours need a pantry complete with a set of service stairs for? Ambling through tight passageways felt like an invasion of the most intimate sort. Gambaro's choice to position her audience in the private, domestic space and its resulting disquiet pushed us as viewers to consider the happenings of the play transpiring in spaces the victims inhabit every day. State-sanctioned violence after all, "gets us where we live, nullifying any existence of any safe space" (Taylor 170). Inhabiting such a sensitive, cramped physical space pushed us, as intruders and watchers, to consider what right we have to occupy it at all. The discomfort with the recognition of ourselves as simply voyeurs then suggests we should resolve this uneasiness by rejecting inaction.

Sharing such tight quarters with my fellow audience members, I also gained unique insight from observing their body language. Passing through from room to room, we followed each other in silence, single file. The Guide tried to interact with us, bringing up small-talk and pleasantries about the snow falling outside, but we remained stoic with uncertainty. Across the board, everyone was reserved and unsure how to react. Is this another scripted scene in which

a disturbed actor will jump out of the closet? Will our interactions with the Guide be construed as supporting his behavior? Will he regard us as rude attendees if we don't answer his questions? In this more ambiguous space, we found ourselves entangled in the larger thematic mechanisms of the play. After all, what is complicity? What are its physical manifestations?

Scrutinizing my fellow audience members during some of the more threatening, thematically-intense scenes, I noticed many of them avoiding eye contact with the characters and looking down, as if to escape the false vulnerability represented. This behavior exemplifies how uncomfortable Gambaro makes her viewers with their own inaction. A particular instance of this which stands out in my experience is scene 13, when the girl Hermenegilda recites a delicate monologue before she is killed. This scene took place in the kitchen, with actress lying on her back on the surface of the table, and audience members seated at each chair. As she sat up to speak, she attempted to make eye-contact, moving her head to face each seat, but viewer reactions ranged from intermittent gazes to flat-out evasion of her eyes. As she admitted she "would like to die / as softly as possible" (106), audience apprehension was palpable in the room. Viewers were frozen as she spoke these devastating lines. As witnesses unable to sympathize, console, converse, or merely interact with such a miserable figure in order to diffuse the tension, they were condemned to simply watch. This restrictive viewership forces audience members to feel the unpleasantness in their own inaction, and subsequently reject it.

As a viewer I experienced an especially potent convergence of issues of complicity with issues of reality occurred in Scene 14. In this scene, I was singled out directly and asked, "Does this shoe belong to you?" (114) by an actor playing a police officer. In my head I contemplated – do I say yes because he wants me to? Or do I say no because I know this will advance the story?

My initial thoughts were entangled in two forms of complicity. The first was one of complicity within the world of the play: in this narrative, this man is a police officer who I know will torture / disappear the person he's asking me about if he catches them and would do the same to me if I tell him it's my shoe. The second form of complicity was more keyed to compliance or decorum as a participant: being complicity for the sake of the flow of the play, i.e. I know that he knows this is not really my shoe, and I know that the forthcoming actions will reveal him hunting down and punishing the subversive whose shoe this actually is. Ultimately, I *felt* that I had no real choice of an answer and had to act within the bounds of the play and respond no, it wasn't my shoe, because I had to ensure the continuation of the production. My perceptions and decision (which felt like no decision) echo how political disturbances are treated in authoritarian governments. Disruptions of the ruling power's façade are not permitted; the play must continue undisturbed. At times, criticism may be invited, but never with an actual option of progress. There is no substantial room to be transgressive, but effective authoritarian regimes will provide the illusion of it to keep its subjects feeling somewhat agentive. This is, I would argue, the function of the guides and players who engage the audience: to make us feel *as if* we had a say even when the mechanics of production keep our participation from meaningfully shaping the outcomes of the scenes.

RELEVANCE TODAY

As a text and as a performed work, Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners* astutely represents the embodied confusion, fear, selfishness, discomfort, trauma, and complicity that may be activated living under an authoritarian regime, instilling these same The play's significance to the late 20th century Argentine predicament is overshadowed only by its

popularity in 21st century North American Anglophone academic circles. A piece which never circulated within its original, intended historical context is now reaching a more broad, global audience facing a distinctly different set of challenges. Here, I will explore explore how the artistic dimensions of *Information for Foreigners* provide it sufficient vitality and friction to intervene productively in pressing conversations more today than ever before.

In order to discuss how and why Gambaro's project maintains its grip as a dynamic work today, it is first necessary to outline the history of the play's circulation. To review details I have briefly touched on earlier in this paper, *Information for Foreigners* was written between 1971-1973. Given that it tackled the culture of violence, disappearance, fear-mongering, and state-sanctioned terrorism advanced by the fascist, military-controlled Argentine government of the time, Gambaro had essentially no option for publication without grave consequences. After all, the government punished, tortured, killed, and disappeared its challengers. Thus, as detailed in translator Feitlowitz's introduction to the work, Gambaro hid the play in her house, then smuggled the manuscript out of the country when she was forced into exile in Barcelona in 1977 (5). The work circulated as samizdat throughout Europe in the early '80s, but Gambaro denied any offers for productions, fearing safety of family members still in Argentina (Feitlowitz 5). Nonetheless, international word-of-mouth turned the work into a minor cult classic, so Feitlowitz's translation began in 1986 from a then unpublished, unrevised manuscript (6). *Información para extranjeros* was first published in Buenos Aires in 1987 by De La Flor Publishers as part of an anthology of her plays, and *Information for Foreigners* was published by Northwestern University Press five years later in 1992. The publishing of the English translation was cataclysmic in transforming Gambaro's work to a canonical piece of literature read in

Anglophone universities. This specific instance really demonstrates the mobility English translations can afford a publication; it is no coincidence that the work has only been officially performed in its English translation in the US. Publication by a prestigious American university elevated *Information for Foreigners* to the awareness of scholars of world literature with the greater amounts of influence and status, and pushed it to be widely embraced in scholarship and examined in classrooms worldwide for the first time.

What the dimensions of our contemporary political framework which allow dramaturges, professors, scholars, artists, etc. to continually employ *Information for Foreigners* as something that offers topical, compelling insight to struggles faced today? As Richard Schechner reminds us, no single performance can exactly copy another performance, thus each event is unique in its interactivity (23). An examination of Information *for Foreigners* 's ascent to more widespread recognition would be incomplete without taking into account the respective situations in which it has been staged or circulated. People are clearly connecting with the themes of *Information for Foreigners*, taking the initiative to share the text throughout their social and academic circles. It is no accident that in the same year I chose to write my undergraduate thesis on this work, a private, liberal arts college down the road decided to perform this play. There is something here that people understand as bringing insight to their struggles in contemporary circumstances.

As Schechner outlines beautifully in his book, since the late '60s and early '70s, radical subversive thought has carved out a place for itself in academia. The 1960s peoples' springs were promptly snuffed out by ruling elites in the years to follow. Thus, with nowhere else to turn, many radicals took refuge in scholarship, where they "won in theory what was not

accomplished in the streets" (130). In place of protests and demonstrations, people with grave concern for the status quo turned to writings, seminars, petitions, art-works, lectures, etc. as sites of resistance (130), and the universities embraced these cultural expressions with open arms as a chance to construe themselves as "liberal". The result is that these radical movements lost their "massive" quality to them, and found their place confined to the subculture of academia. As a piece whose subversive themes only found an audience and impact after its Northwestern University Press publication, we can consider these contemporary readings and performances of *Information for Foreigners* as practices within this subculture.

As radical thought continually shifts to marginal spaces of society, the influence of fascism, nationalism, authoritarianism, and wealth advances worldwide, exemplified with the elections of Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Matteo Salvini, and Argentina's own Mauricio Macri. These are just a few names from an extensive (and growing) list of leaders elected in the past decade who share a series of alarming qualities including an explicit preference for big business, a crude racism, and a general disrespect for democratic processes. It makes sense that this, combined with the generalized sense of precarity I described in the introduction, means that many are searching for opportunities for resistance, for meaningful calls to action, and for aesthetic experiences that help to draw out the complexities of action and engagement in the existing power structures. This point is only confirmed with an examination of the Denison production's program. Stated frankly by the dramaturge and artist-in-residence Karie Miller in her notes presenting the performance:

> Reminders, for foreigners:

- No one knows how many people were disappeared during the Dirty War period in Argentina.
- The US has detained 15,000 children at the Southern border. 10% of these children are unaccounted for or missing.
- Flint, MI still lacks clean water"

(Program for Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*)

With these "reminders", Miller is explicitly drawing a parallel between the circumstances Gambaro wrote under with our context today, asking viewers of the play to apply the issues the work brings up to the contemporary context. Writing within the university system, Miller's words stand as an exemplar for how *Information for Foreigners* is encountered by educated people with radical intentions and employed to affirm the necessity for collective action in the political world today.

Additionally, although somewhat difficult to describe, the fragmented, misshaped, manipulative structures of *Information for Foreigner* reflect media-centered nature of human life, and offers insight into how to navigate these struggles. This is not to say that this issue necessarily existed during the period from which Gambaro wrote, but this theme has become potent in the contemporary contexts, and Gambaro's play offers insight into how to navigate these struggles. To return to Schechener's discussion of media I briefly mentioned in the introduction, the distinction between art and quotidian life continues to dissolve. Speculation, human interest, and scandal are infused into even the dullest of news stories, and everything can be turned into performance to with an internet connection and a working camera. With the rise of opinion-based news sources, we see more people divided into political "feedback loops", chopping up narratives and loading them with dangerous interpretations. As a work which ostensibly utilizes media to frame and develop its action, *Information for Foreigners* prompts the consideration of how news can be fragmented and remade for distinctly political advances

and also how these various ideologies make their way into quotidian life. The jarring juxtaposition of scenes and sudden shifts in focus and narrative make participating in a production of *Information for Foreigners* feel a lot like scrolling through Facebook. However, the grotesque-ness of the work offers its own sites for healing. In his discussion of the Living Newspaper as therapy, Casson describes the benefit experienced actively participating in making and interacting with news. For participants who have often functioned as passive consumers of a practically constant flow of information, dramatizing and transforming the news can instill a unique, powerful agency (120), inciting a similar therapeutic process. Although as I mentioned before, *Information for Foreigners* refrains from directly provoking viewers to act and instead confines them to confront their discomfort as passive agents, I would argue *Information for Foreigners* has a comparable effect. Pushed to recognize the difficulty of their own inaction, Gambaro's audience then is equipped to begin to register the complexity of response and action – a complexity we have to address if we want to begin to act in our own disconcerting media ecologies and political arenas.

CONCLUSION

Information for Foreigners has never really had its moment. A work loaded with biting commentary on its own specific contexts, in conversation with other Latin American theatrical traditions of the late 20th century, it never had the opportunity to offer its insights to face those specific challenges. However, that does not mean its teachings are lost. I have argued *Information for Foreigners* is relevant today now more than ever, and this is most clear in how it has been embraced by many. Its uncertainty, its discomfort, its loaded dialogues, its creeping narrative structure, its conscious voyeurism all touch on something which spreads more

universally than just a representation of Argentina's state terrorism in the early 1970s. It's funny how a play seemingly unremovable from its respective historic context finds reception, passion, and edge in a separate situation, 40+ years later. In fact, while obviously fortuitous circumstances brought it to mainstream circulation, its success now seems beyond mere coincidence. It makes sense though, in the context of the '70s, coming out of the excitement from liberation movements, Boal's Theatre of Liberation was so notorious for how it exercised a "rehearsal" for the revolution. A plain black-and-white, we need to be inspired to act so as spectators, we will flip the role of the spectator on itself, it clearly connected with audiences because it relied on such a clearly defined idea of resistance which they were accustomed to.

However, Gambaro's work is more subtle. It plays in ambiguities, minute discomfort, and questions of witnessing which are much more pertinent to our uncertain times. We have only become witnesses to more abuses of power. We watch videos of protests and corrupt police shot on an iPhone nestled in with advertisements, memes, and vacation pictures as we scroll through social media. Are we a witness when we watch 30 seconds of an ICE raid in Texas before watching 10 seconds of our friend's friend's baby shower? Are we a witness when we watch an actor pretend to give another actor a lethal electric shock? *Information for Foreigners* brings us to direct engagement with these complexities and equips us with the tools to consider the possibility of response and action. Instead of giving us a field guide of appropriate revolutionary plans, Gambaro trains her viewers to sit with their uneasiness, and contemplate what a successful intervention would involve, a process of the utmost relevance to our contemporary contexts as well. As the internet grows as a site for subversion, the line between performative activism and meaningful advocacy is blurred as well. Does sharing a flyer for a

protest on your Instagram story, but not attending, constitute resistance? Is stopping an actor pretending to be a policeman from harassing another actor pretending to be an Argentine civilian a form of protest? The latter question is a clear no but spurs a discussion of what constructive resistance would look like, which helps to inform the former. The growing influence of Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners* equips the contemporary viewer with the tools to grapple these questions in order to productively refuse complicity in contemporary power structures.

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